

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /006 W
-----005378 071719Z /47
R 071447Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7252
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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STATE FOR SY/OPS/T; PANMA FOR OIC/RTC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, ASUP
SUBJECT: COM ARMORED CAR 1969 CHEVROLET IMPALA

REF: STATE 046070

1. SUBJECT VEHICLE DRIVER FROM PANAMA ARRIVED LATE NOVEMBER 1977. POST HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PLACE VEHICLE INTO OPERATION DUE CONTINUING MALFUNCTIONING. FOLLOWING IS A SYNOPSIS OF PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE KEPT THIS VEHICLE INOPERABLE.

2. ENROUTE TO POST, CAR DEVELOPED UNRESOLVED MECHANICAL PROBLEMS, BELIEVED RELATED TO FUEL SUPPLY. CB MECHANIC WHO ACCOMPANIED RSO SANFORD FROM PANAMA TO SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA, WAS UNABLE TO MAKE FINAL REPAIRS. TEMPORARY REPAIRS PERMITTED RSO TO CONTINUE TRAVEL TO SAN SALVADOR. BEFORE ARRIVING CHANCERY, VEHICLE AGAIN MALFUNCTIONED.

3. ON DAY FOLLOWING ARRIVAL IN SAN SALVADOR AND FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, BUT BELIEVED DUE TO FAULTY INSTALLATION, BULLET RESISTANT WINDSHIELD SHATTERED
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WHILE CAR WAS PARKED IN CHANCERY LOT.

4. TECHNICIANS WHO ARRIVED JANUARY 1978 TO REPLACE THE WINDSHIELD DIAGNOSED THE MECHANICAL PROBLEM AS AN INADEQUATE FUEL PUMPT AND RECOMMENDED REPLACEMENT WITH AN ELECTRIC FUEL PUMP. TEAM ALSO CHECKED FUEL LINES FOR OBSTRUCTION. FUEL PUMP WAS INSALLED

BUT PERFORMANCE WAS NOT IMPROVED. SOLUTION OFFERED THEN WAS A LARGER CARBURETOR. EMBASSY RECEIVED TWO CARBURETORS IN LATE FEBURARY. ONE HAS BEEN INSTALLED BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT.

5. NUMEROUS U.S. AND LOCAL TECHNICIANS HAVE CHECKED THE FUEL SYSTEM, THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM AND THE MECHANICAL FUNCTIONING OF THE VEHICLE, BUT NONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO CORRECTLY DIAGNOSE AND PROPERLY REPAIR THIS VEHICLE.

6. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, EMBASSY HAS BEEN USING A VEHICLE BORROWED FROM THE EMBASSY IN GUATEMALA. THIS VEHICLE HAS ALSO REWIRED NUMEROUS REPAIRS SINCE WE BORROWED IT IN OCTOBER 1977. FURTHER, EMBASSIES GUATEMALA AND MANAGUA ARE NOW INQUIRING WHEN VEHICLE WILL BE RELEASED FOR USE IN MANAGUA. FOR REASONS KNOWN TO SY, POST MUST CONTINUE UTILIZING GUATEMALA VEHICLE FOR COM TRANSPORTATION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE 1969 CHEVROLET IMPALA IS COMPLETELY FUNCTIONAL AND DEPENDABLE FOR SUCH USAGE.

7. IN VIEW OF THE MANY PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE 1969 CHEVROLET IMPALA, THE CONSIDERABLE COSTS TO DATE AND THE FRUSTRATING ATTEMPTS TO REPAIR A VEHICLE NEARLY TEN YEARS OLD AND WITH AN ODOMETER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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READING OF NEARLY 100,000 MILES, TOGETHER WITH ASSESSMENT THAT AMBASSADOR WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE ANIORMORED VEHICLE INDEFINITELY, EMBASSY STRONGLY URGES DEPARTMENT PROCURE NEWER AND MORE RELIABLE VEHICLE FOR SHIPMENT TO SAN SALVADOR AT AN EARLY DATE.

8. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WISH TO POINT OUT THAT POST HAS STANDARDIZED ON CHEVROLET PASSENGER VEHICLES AND INSASMUCH AS THERE IS A QUALIFIED CHEVROLET DEALER IN SAN SALVADOR, A GENERAL MOTORS COM VEHICLE IS GREATLY PREFERRED.
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